

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice of Intent to Adopt a Negative Declaration

WHAT IS BEING PLANNED?

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) is publishing a Negative Declaration and supporting Initial Study (IS/ND) for the Experimental Release of Delta Smelt Project (Project). The Project proposes to annually release up to 60,000 adult equivalents¹ of surplus hatchery origin Delta Smelt each year into a portion of the current range of the species for a three-year period. The purpose of the Project would be part of an early experimental release effort to answer several high priority questions to inform the feasibility of future supplementation efforts, if pursued in the future. The hatchery fish would be propagated at the University of California Davis Fish Conservation and Culture Laboratory in Byron, California. The Project would rely on ongoing monitoring performed by the nine-member agency Interagency Ecological Program's (IEP) studies for sampling and data collection which have been ongoing since the 1970's and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Enhanced Delta Smelt Monitoring Program.

The Project would be conducted in various waterways within the areas of the legal Delta that cross into Contra Costa, Sacramento, Solano and Yolo counties and, Suisun Bay and Grizzly Bay, within the following USGS quadrangles: Davis, Sacramento W, Saxon, Clarksburg, Courtland, Liberty Island, Dozier, Rio Vista, Birds Landing, Denverton, Fairfield, Vine Hill, Honker Bay, Antioch N, and Jersey Island.

WHY THIS NOTICE?

CDFW has studied the effects that this proposed Project may have on the environment and found that it will not significantly affect the quality of the environment. These findings are documented in a Draft Initial Study (IS) with proposed Negative Declaration (ND). This Notice is to inform you of the preparation of the Draft IS/ND and of its availability for you to read and provide input.

WHAT IS AVAILABLE?

The Draft IS/ND, maps and other related information for the Proposed Project, are available to view and download at the CDFW website at: <https://wildlife.ca.gov/Notices>

The review period is 30 days from August 10, 2021 – September 10, 2021. All comments must be received by September 10, 2021.

¹ Slater (2017) estimated the proportion of surviving wild Delta Smelt across life stages starting from eggs through adults based on data available from 2015-2016. Using the proportion survival between life stages (eggs, larvae, juvenile, and adult) it is possible to estimate the number of Delta Smelt at each life stage that are equivalent to one surviving adult or "adult equivalent". For example, because survival rates from eggs to adults is cumulatively 0.0875% ($1/1,143 = 0.000875$) then 1,143 eggs could be released and expected to result in one adult surviving to maturity. As a result, we would define 1,143 eggs as one adult equivalent.